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OBSERVATIONS

O N

W. Newton

# Sudden Death.

Occasion'd by the late frequent  
Instances of it, both in CITY  
and COUNTRY.

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By B. GROSVENOR.

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*Left coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.*  
Mark xiiij. 36.

*Therefore be ye also ready,* Matt. xxiv. 44.

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Fleres si scires unum tua tempora Menssem,  
Rides cum non sit forsitan una Dies.

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L O N D O N:

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# London

located by the first president  
of the city of London  
and the city of London



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# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## Sudden Death, &c.



THE many sudden Deaths in the Two last Years, have been Matter of every Bodies Notice. The Annual Bills for the Years 1718, 1719. have under the Articles of *Apoplexy*, and *sudden Deaths*, added together 400. and of Casualties 671. so that throwing out the Executions, and what else may be reasonably excepted, the Number of *sudden Deaths* may be allowed to be near a Thousand, within the Bills of Mortality only. But if it be consider'd, how often the *Death* is *sudden*, and yet never set down under *that* Article, but under some such Article as the Symptoms refer it to, we have reason to Conclude the Number much greater. It is hardly ever put down *sudden Death*, but when they don't know what else to call it; The Symptoms, otherwise, fix the



Denomination, tho' it be never so *sudden*: There are great Numbers, no doubt, for this Reason, set down under *Cholick* and *Convulsions*, &c, whose *Deaths* were yet *sudden*, and as such, the proper Subject of my Observations, let the Symptoms attending their *sudden Deaths*, be what they will.

But to leave the Bills of Mortality, there is hardly a Corner of the Nation but has afforded some Instances of Sudden Death. Publick accounts have abounded with them; besides, vast Numbers that never come there. This was the Occasion of these Remarks, together with my Apprehensions of becoming an Instance of it my self. I was willing to take a View of what I have thought sometimes not a great way off; and it appears to me according to the following Observations, which I hope may be of some use to others.

§ 1. There is a difference between a *sudden Death*, and a *surprizing* one. A Man may die suddenly; who is not surprized, because the Thing was not *Unthought* of, but the Matter frequent Meditation. Not surpris'd, because it was not *Unforeseen*, but what he had his Eye upon, and expected; 'twas what he had *waited for*, and was no sooner struck with, but he could lift up his Eyes, with the good Old Patriarch, and say, *I have waited for thy Salvation O Lord*. Again, not surpris'd, because not *unprepared*. He was not *that evil Servant who prepared not himself*. The sudden Death we  
pray

pray against, is not to be understood in the Sense of *Quickness* and *Dispatch* when the Time is come, but of *surprise*, in an unsafe State, an unsuitable Frame of Spirit; and Posture of Affairs. (a)

There is also, a double Sense of the Word *surprise*, made use of in this Subject. To *surprise*, signifies either to *startle* and *alarm*, or to *prevent*, and *cut short* a Work *unfinished*. In the Sense of *startle* and *alarm*, the best Man in the World may be *surprised* by *sudden Death*. If by a Spirit of Prophecy, I were able to point out the best Christian in the Company, and tell him, from God, *Sir, you shall Die before you speak another Word, or get home to your House!* It might well *surprise* in the Sence of *startle* and *alarm*, but not as it signifies *taking unprepared*, or the prevention of any thing necessary to the εὐδαιμονία (b) the *Blessed Death* of one, who is habitually and actually ready.

§ 2. There

(a) From Battle, Murder, and from *sudden Death*,

Lit.

*A morte subitanea et improvisa*

Brev.

(ie) From a sudden and unprepared Death.

(b) *Augustus* used this Word to express a Quick and Easy Death only; such as he always wished for, and at last obtain'd; what I have added compleats the Sence, and makes an happy Death indeed.

Defecit (AUGUSTUS) Sortitus exitum facilem, & qualem semper Optaverat. Nam fere quoties Asidisset, cito ac nulla cruciatu defunctum querapiam, sibi, et suis εὐδαιμονίαν similem (hoc enim & verbo uti solebat) precabatur.

Suet. Aug. l. 2.



§ 2. There are *Degrees* of *sudden Deaths*: We call it *sudden* if a Man be taken ill one *Day*, and Dead the next; more so, if he be taken one *Hour* and Dead the next; more *sudden* still, if gone in a *Minute*, before he can speak another Word; which has been the Case of many of late.

§ 3. There are several *sorts* of *sudden Death*: Some are *Accidental*, as by a Tyle from an *House*, a Fall, a Blow, &c. Those who perish'd in the Ruins of the *Houses* that have fallen down of late; Those who have been lately destroyed by Lightnings, of which there has been a great Number, both in Foreign Parts and at home; Those who have fallen off their Horses, and been taken up Dead, or expired in a little time; are of this Sort. The same may be said of such who have perished in the Flames and Ruins of their *Houses*, where the Fire made such haste to devour, as most unexpectedly to Intercept the poor Creatures in their unhappy *Endeavours* to save something. *Endeavours*, which every one in the like Confusion, is ready to imagine there is room for. Remember *Lot's Wife*, is a *memento*, we are not always capable of profiting by. If it Cures us of hankering after the *Stuff* of this World, so as to prevent being overtaken with Eternal Flames, it will be happy. Some are *violent sudden Deaths*, as in *Murders* and *Battles*. The sort which the *Litany* seems to mean by putting

ting them together, in the same Petition, *from Battle, Murder, and sudden Death, &c.* Some we may call *natural sudden Deaths*. If we may be allowed to do so, because, proceeding more immediately from some *natural* Cause; whether known or not. As in the Case of *Apoplexies*, or any other *sudden* stroaks. He that mistakes the Phial, and swallows Poyson instead of a Cordial, Dies as *natural* a *Death*, as he does, who receives his *Death* from a little Stream of Air thro' a small Crevise, in his Neck; he catches Cold, it becomes a *Fever*, he dies; as *naturally* as another, who dies by the disruption of any Blood Vessel, or *sudden* stoppage in any of those fine Channels of Life. If the Blood stagnates and will not Circulate at all, or if it whirls round too fast, what signifies it, whether the Cause of these killing Extremes be from within or from without us? But if Custom will have *that* only to be *natural Death*, whose Rise and Cause, is from within us, we must Submit. (c)

§ 4. *Sud-*

(c) We call that only a *natural* Death (*viz.* dying of decay of Strength or of Old Age) as if it were contrary to nature, to see a Man break his Neck with a fall, be drowned by a Shipwreck, be snatch'd away by a *Pleurisy* or *Plague*; and as if our ordinary Condition of Life did not expose us to these Inconveniencies, as much as to any other, we call *natural*. Let us no more deceive our selves with those fine sounding Words, we ought rather to call that *natural* which is common, and universal, to Die of Old Age, is a Death, rare, extraordinary, and singular; and therefore, so much *less natural* than others, 'tis the last and extremest sort of Dying, and therefore more remote, and the less to be hoped for.



§ 4. Sudden Death is not *in it self* a *Judgment* from God, nor token of God's displeasure. *Think not that they are greater Sinners than others,* is the Divine Caution. The very sudden Death of some good Men, shows that we must not *measure Love or Hatred by these things that are before us,* by meer external Providences. “ This is a deceitful Beam at  
 “ which we are very prone to weigh Men  
 “ and Things. But hereby God gives us a plain  
 “ and sensible Proof of the Truth of that Scrip-  
 “ ture, that *all things, of this sort, Come alike*  
 “ *to all Men, and there is one event to the*  
 “ *righteous and to the wicked.* The best Rule  
 “ to form our Judgment as to this Point, is,  
 “ the manner of Men's Lives and not of their  
 “ Deaths.” (d)

The suddenness of Mens departure, alone, is no black mark from Heaven upon them. No more than it will be upon those Saints, who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, to be *suddenly* changed, *in the twinkling of an Eye and caught up to meet the Lord in the Air.* That is not to be counted a bad Death, which is preceded by a good Life, 'tis what follows, Death makes it so. For them that must Die, the concern is not so much how they go out of the World, as whether they must go.

For

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(d) N. Taylor's Serm. On the Death of N. Vincent.



*Forbesus* (e) Writes of a Disease that broke out in *Italy*, about the Year 590, that carried off vast Numbers suddenly. Men dyed in the Streets, on the Roads, at their Tables, while they were talking with their Friends; and very often in Sneezing, which brought in the custom (there at least) of crying *God bless you*, upon that Convulsive shake of the Nerves. *Pelagius Secundus*, Bishop of *Rome*, died of this common Calamity. He was a Man (it seems) of an excellent Character, for Religion and Learning. Our Author takes Occasion from thence to caution against censuring, and passing severe Judgements on such Occasions; when good Men die with grievous Pains, or by a *sudden Death*, as well as others. From *Wilelmus Tyrus* his History of the *Holy War*, and of the Kingdom of *Jerusalem*, he Quotes the Story of *Fulco* King of *Jerusalem*; one, who like *David*, was a *Man after God's own Heart*. Of great Faith and Holiness, affability and compassion; and abounding in Works of Piety; and yet this good Man died *suddenly*, and miserably, by a fall from his Horse, and the Horse rolling upon him so as to press the the Brains out at his Ears and Nostrils. *Frderick* the first who bid so fair to make the *Christian Arms* Triumph over all the *Usurping Infidels*;

C

after

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(e) *Augustinus* (citante *Forbesio*) Mala mors putanda non est, quam bona vita Præcesserit, neq; enim facit malam mortem nisi quod Sequitur mortem. Non itaq; multum curandum est eis qui necessario morituri sunt, quid accadat ut moriantur, sed moriendo quo ire cogantur.

*Inst. Hist. & Theol.*

(e) *Forb. Instruct: Hist. Theol. l. 3. c. 30. §. 3.*

after many Conquests, and just within reach of the Glory of an intire Ruin of the *Saracen* Powers, to the great regret of all *Christians*, died suddenly in the River he was bathing himself in. *Holcoth's* Story is very remarkable to our Purpose, (*f*) a learned Man, was found dead in his Study among his Books. To find a Friend stark dead was very surprising; but when they come to observe him nearer, they found a Book before him, and his fore Finger pointing to this Place in the Book of *Wisdom*; *ch. 4. 7. for tho' the righteous be prevented with Death yet shall he have rest; for honorable age, is not that which stands in length of time, nor that which is measured by number of years, but wisdom, is the grey hairs unto a man; and unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of him; so that living among Sinners he was translated.* When they saw this, they had a good Account of the Matter; and had as much reason to be comforted as they were dejected before. Tho' the Book of *Wisdom* be *Apocryphat*, and not *Canonical Scripture*, it is considerable as an ancient Writing, of some godly Jews and held in esteem, as other good Composures may be. Tho' not for *Authority*, yet for useful *Instruction*; and, whether this good Man died as reading this Passage, or pointed to it as he found himself going, it expresses the Sense of our Observation, that *sudden Death, meerly as such,*

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(*f*) Forb: Instruct. Hist. Theol. ubi Supra.



*such, is not to be accounted a Judgement from God. Sudden Death may be a Mercy to the good Man, and a warning to the bad. Moses died suddenly. It is what some good Men have desired and prayed for. So did Mr. Capel (g) and God gave him his desire, for on Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>. 1656. having preached twice that Day, and performed Religious Duties with his Family, he went to Bed and died immediately. He would often say, if God saw fit, one had better die of a quick, than of a ling'ring Death.*

*The suddenness of the stroke, was a great trouble to some of us at first (says Mr. Marshal) but since we have collected our thoughts, we must needs say, God's way is best. (h) So died Mr. Brightman, according to his constant desire and preference. So did Jacobus Faber, and Wolfius, another excellent Man, mentioned by Mr. Mather, who has this remark upon the whole, The Man who being in Christ, shall always be doing something for God, may bid Death welcome, when ever it shall come, be it never so soon, never so suddenly.*

*Mr. T. Gouge that Evangelist of Wales, who did more for the propagating the Gospel there, than ever was done before; went to Bed well, was found dead in the Morning.*

*" It so pleased God that his death was very  
" sudden; so sudden that in all probability he  
" himself hardly perceived it when it hap-  
" pened, for he died in his sleep; so that we*

(g) Mr. Increase Mather's Remarkable Providences.

(h) Preface to Capel's Remains.

“ may say of him as it is said of *David*, after  
 “ he had served his generation according to the  
 “ will of God HE FELL ASLEEP” (i) and  
 “ then that excellent Author adds “ I confess  
 “ that a *sudden death* is generally undesira-  
 “ ble, and therefore with reason we pray  
 “ against it; because so very few are sufficiently  
 “ prepared for it: but to him, the constant  
 “ employment of whole life was the best pre-  
 “ paration for *Death* that was possible, no  
 “ *Death* could be *sudden*; nay, it was rather  
 “ a favour and blessing to him, because by  
 “ how much the more *sudden*, so much the  
 “ more easy: As if God had designed to begin  
 “ the Reward of the great Pains of his Life in an  
 “ easy *Death*. And indeed it was rather a  
 “ Translation than a *Death*; and, saving  
 “ that his Body was left behind, what was  
 “ said of *Enoch* may not be unfitly applyed  
 “ to this pious and good Man, with respect to  
 “ the *suddenness* of his change; he walked  
 “ with God, and was not, for God took him.”  
 (i)

Mr. *Hardy* — God put him to sleep in  
 much the same manner with Mr. *Gouge* (k)  
 “ Some others, God startled their Congrega-  
 “ tions with their surprisal in the Pulpit. God  
 “ calling them up thither not only to Preach  
 “ but to die. viz. Mr. *Oaks* who was (I think)  
 “ as well in health as (at) any time of his life,  
 “ when he had ended his Afternoon Prayer  
 “ before

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(i) Bishop Tillotson fun. Sermon for Mr. T. Gouge.

(k) Dr. Amesly in his fun. Sermon for the Revd. M. Brand.



“ before his Sermon, God called him to begin  
 “ his eternal Sabbath with himself. And the  
 “ next Lords Day but one, when Mr. *Kentish*  
 “ had roused the Peoples Attention with the  
 “ mention of Mr. *Oake's* being so lately struck  
 “ dead in the Pulpit, God made him a like  
 “ Instance.”

Dr *Leighton* formerly *A. B.* of *Glasgow*,  
 was very apprehensive of the Tryals of a lin-  
 gering *Death*; and particularly desirous that he  
 might not be troublesome to his Friends there-  
 by; it pleased God to gratify his humble and  
 modest choice, for he died in an Inn, in his  
 sleep. I will add here an extraordinary Re-  
 mark concerning his holy Life and Behaviour,  
 which I find in the Epistle to the Reader before  
 his Sermons. *viz. Those who have known*  
*him the most and longest, have often said, that*  
*in a Course of many Years acquaintance, they*  
*scarce ever saw him once out of that deeply se-*  
*rious State, in which they themselves wisht to*  
*be found in their last Minutes.*

Mr. *Shewell* Minister in *Coventry*, went up  
 into the Pulpit, and having prayed and named  
 the Text *Rom. 5. 12. and Death by Sin, so*  
*Death passed upon all Men for that all have*  
*sinned.* was seized with an *Apoplexy* and died  
 within a few Hours. The Remarks made upon  
 this which I find in his funeral Sermon, will  
 be useful and acceptable here; — “ None but  
 “ those that go up with such a Design (to serve  
 “ God and precious Souls) can desire to die  
 “ there; they that ascend thither meerly to  
 “ act

“ act a Part, or to show their learning, or  
 “ to make Factions and Differences (as we are  
 “ accused) dare not desire to die before they  
 “ come down; but this was his *deliberate*  
 “ *Choice*, knowing that in simplicity and Godly  
 “ Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by  
 “ the grace of God, he had his Conversation in  
 “ this World. ——— And I may add, he was  
 “ not the first that died after such a manner,  
 “ nor the first that *desired* to die; If a Heathen  
 “ could say *Oportet Imperatorem Stantem mori*,  
 “ no wonder, if we hear the Ministers of  
 “ Christ desiring to die, *aut precantes, aut*  
 “ *prædicantes*.

“ God is to be humbly adored in such Pro-  
 “ vidences, but by no means let Men insult  
 “ over those whom he has honoured, and  
 “ pronounced *blessed*, for tho’ the *Death* of  
 “ such be astonishing in our sight, its *precious*  
 “ in the sight of God. ——— It calls upon Mi-  
 “ nisters so to Preach, as if they must only  
 “ begin the Sermon and Death end it. ———  
 “ Never to come up into a Pulpit, but in a  
 “ readiness either to Preach or die there, as  
 “ pleased God; and so to Preach *as those who*  
 “ *are dying*, whilst they are Preaching. (1)

§ 5. Some-

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(1) Mr. Tongue fun. Serm. for Mr. Shewell of Coventry 1693.  
 Mr. Vines, Mr. Capel, Mr. Hollingworth, Mr. Ashurst, Mr. Am-  
 brose, Mr. Burnet, these, (as Mr. Baxter says) all dyed sud-  
 denly, either in their work or a little after, so as they did not per-  
 ceive they were dying. to whom we may add the Two Ken-  
 tishes, and Mr. R. Mayo.



§ 5. Sometimes it is inflicted as a *Judgement* from God, and a Token of Divine *Displeasure*. The Circumstances, generally, show it to be so. It was a *Judgement* upon *Ananias* and his Wife, to die *suddenly* with a lie in their Mouths. It was a *Judgement* upon *Herods* pride of Heart, to die so *suddenly* and miserably. When he was fancying himself more than a mortal Creature, to be devoured by the meanest Creatures. It was a *Judgement* upon the *rich Fool* in the Gospel, for placing his Soul's ease and satisfaction, in, *Eat, Drink, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years*. He was cut short with, *thou Fool this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee*.

It is always a *Judgement* when it follows a sinful Act; or overtakes a sinful State. It is observed to be very often the Case of those who put off the Thoughts of God and Goodness, in hopes of after time, or a *Death Bed* repentance; that they either die *suddenly*, and so have no time, or *Senseless*, and have no Capacity.

§ 6. It is sometimes the effect of some displeasure even against *good Men*. *Uzzah's sudden Death*, and that of the disobedient Prophet, show displeasure at their misbehaviour, for which they were punished. Their Character indeed leads us to conclude, that, tho' God made them Examples, yet his displeasure pursued them no farther than the loss of their Lives.

Lives. A Man is not presently damned, because he is struck dead of a *sudden* by God, no more than *Moses* was, when he was commanded to go up and die, for this reason, *because ye trespassed against me, among the Children of Israel at the Waters of Meribah.* (m)

§ 7. *Sudden Death* is always a very serious and affecting thing. To be alive one Minute and dead the next! to change Worlds so *suddenly*!

*Waldus* who gave the Name to those good People called the *Waldenses*, was converted by the *sudden Death* of a Merchant that fell down dead before him. The *Lord Chief Justice Hales*, is said to have been converted, by the *sudden Death* of one of his Companions. An whole Eternity depending upon the Moment I drop down in, and not to be allowed one Prayer, not so much as the Ordinary *Lord have mercy*—! nor any of the common out-crys upon a Mercy long abused, and a Grace long refused!

§ 8. *Sudden Death* is too common a thing to be much wondered at.

The greatest wonder is, that it should be no more common and ordinary. hardly ever more than of late. At first we were somewhat affected with particular Instances, 'till the commonness wore off the Impression, and we left



left off Counting, when we saw no end. Besides the many who have fallen down dead in our Streets. Some were found dead in the Morning who went to Bed well over Night; and some of them had but just bid *good Night*, to their Bedfellows, and turned to sleep their last. Some have closed their Eyes at the Looking Glass, little Imagining they were dressing for their Funeral. Some have expired as they were trying on a New Suite of Cloaths. The measure was taken of a living Body, but the winding Sheet fitted the Carkass. One in his Counting House with the Pen in his Hand, called to give up Accounts of much greater Importance. Another, as putting a Piece of Meat into his Mouth.

*Lætus nobiscum est, hilaris Cœnavit & idem  
 • Inventus mane est mortuus Andragoras.  
 Si Sapis Utaris tatis Coline diebus  
 Extremumq; tibi semper adesse putes.  
 Mart, L. 6.*

Some have dyed away upon the *Royal Exchange*. The Bailly has been Arrested by *Death* just after he had done his Office upon his Prisoner; The One was thrown into *Prison*, the other into the Grave. There have been Instances of *sudden* dying, while paying a Visit; sitting in a Chair; stumbling at a Threshold, coming out of a Room; at a Table, one with a Glass of Wine in his Hand just going to drink, another, while moving a Man at a Game at  
 D ————— Drafts,

Drafts, at the Coffee House; at Church; and other Places of resort.

It has carryed off Children and young Men, middle Age and old Men. The fond Parent says, “ *I did but turn my back and the Child was dead.*” “ I left it well (says another,) but an Hour before.” (n) Diseases and *Death* are secretly lurking for us every where. It is in our Bosoms, in our Bowels; in every thing we Taste, in every thing we enjoy. Sleeping or waking, abroad or at home, at the Table, in the Church; in Company or alone; in the Street or the Closet. The greater wonder is, that it is no more frequent and common, if we consider but three or four Things.

(1) If we consider, *to what our Life is compared* in Scripture. Is it a wonder that *Water is spilt upon the Ground?* that the *Wind* passes away? that the *Vapour* is scattered, and the *Bubble* broke? that the *Shadow* flees away, and the *Flower of the Grass* is withered and cut down? or if we consider,

(2) The *make and frame* of our Bodies, the Materials of which they consist, and the manner of their Composition. Do we not dwell in Houses of Clay, whose foundation is in the Dust, *crushed sooner than a Moth?* The Stuff is mean and base, that our vile Bodies are made of; the manner of putting together is exquisite; *we are fearfully and wonderfully made.* (o) As when we look upon a piece of Workmanship when the brittle Materials are finely

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(n) 2 K. 4. P9.

(o) Ps. 139. 14.



finely put together, we hold it tenderly, we are *fearful*, least it fall to pieces, and wonder it does not do so, even while we are surveying it. *Q. D.* “ I dread that Power, who can so  
“ easily, so *suddenly*, take me asunder, as  
“ thou didst put me together! I am so won-  
“ derfully made, as that I may be apprehen-  
“ sive of it every where, and ready for it at all  
Times”! So many fine and Imperceptible  
Parts! so many Chanells and Conveyances?  
So many Threads, Strings, Fibers, Veins,  
Arteries, Nerves, Sinews, Ligaments, Ten-  
dons; with their proper Insertions, Positi-  
ons, precise Motions, and Powers! so many  
nice Secretions of Fluids, Juices and Humours!  
and such continued necessary *Play* of the En-  
gine in its minutest Parts, and flow of Animal  
Spirits; the stopping, cracking, bursting, or  
Intangling of any of these, may be *sudden*  
*Death*! what a wonder is Health and Life, to  
which the harmony of all these is so necessary?  
what a wonder indeed! not that this Machine  
should be out of Order, and be spoiled, but  
rather, that an Instrument of so many Thou-  
sand Strings should be so long kept in Tune!  
thro’ all the shocks and blows and violences;  
thro’ all the changes of Heat and Cold, Wet  
and Dry? why should we wonder at any ones  
*sudden Death*? ’Tis Ignorance to stand amazed,  
when a Venice Glass that had been kept with  
care for sometime is broke upon a fall; ’tis  
Madness to depend upon the Life and Health  
of such a Body for a Day, and Hour, a Mi-  
D 2 nute;

nute; and to suppose the Sickness and Death of such a Body can be far off. Especially if we add,

(3) In the third Place, the *Accidents* which these fine Compositions are lyable to from without. Turn your Eyes from the niceness of our Frame and Composition, to the infinite Accidents we are lyable to. It would be endless to enumerate. I ought always to carry my Life in my Hand, as the Phrase is; that is, to be ready, to give it up, when ever it is called for, and to suppose, when I go out, that I shall not return alive. a fall, a Tile, a bruise, a stone, may do my Business. Its too great a venture to go abroad with a Soul not fit for God. This is the *Art of walking London Streets*, considering how many Houses have fallen lately, and how many more are feared. But you'll retreat into the Country? There they'll tell you, how many have been killed *suddenly* by Lightning. Some at the Plough, some in the Field, in their Garden, in their Beds. Besides, with remote and small Accidents have been Mortal? Hardly any Thing in nature so small, but is able to conceal *Death* and Disease under it. *Anacreons* grape Stone did his business as effectually as a Thunderbolt. *Fabius* the Roman Senator was choaked with a single Hair in a draught of Milk. *Pope Alexander* by a Flie that flew accidentally into his Mouth. *Aurdianus* dropt down Dead in the midst of a Dance. These are old Instances hardly ever forgot upon this Subject. There are Thousands of the like nature of a more modern Date, but all Persons  
are



are not of Name and Note enough, to have the manner of their *Death* recorded. From the History of *sudden Death*, this part of the Subject might be farther illustrated. In short, all this Inforces the Admonition of the wise Man, *boast not thy self of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.* Nay, it appears from these surprises, that thou knowest not what a Meal, a Mouthful, a Draught, a Step, a Moment, *may bring forth.* And therefore it is a *Senceless*, as well as a *Graceless* Thing, in a time of the best Health of Body in the World, to suppose Sicknes and *Death* to be a great way off.

(4) I shall but just mention in the last Place the *Diseases and Distempers* the Body is liable to, from within. And I need but mention this, because, few of them carry with them *sudden Death*, but do most of them take some Time, more or less, to do their Execution. Apoplexies and Convulsions, are indeed of quick Dispatch. Some Fevers too have burnt down the Tabernacle almost in as little Time as a Fire would take, to burn down a House; and may be consider'd among the degrees of *suddenness*.

What Man can ensure life for a Day, when there are so many ways of attack; so many shapes under *which Death* may enter? Is there any Sence in putting off the Thoughts of another World, because I am well at present? Is it not a much better Condition to be able to think of it as near, without disturbance or uneasiness, by getting into such a Condition both

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as to *Soul* and as to *Affairs*, as to be able to say with your self, ----- “ Well! now let  
 “ Sickness and *Death* come when they will, I  
 “ thank God I am ready for them. I have no-  
 “ thing to do but to wait Orders, to Compose  
 “ my Body to fall decently, and rise glori-  
 “ ously; and my Mind to resign chearfully  
 “ and willingly. In the mean Time, I will  
 “ enjoy my self ---- I will enjoy my God, my  
 “ Friend, and my Comforts of Life, and that  
 “ with so much the greater Pleasure, and swee-  
 “ ter relish, than others can do, in as much,  
 “ as it is without the fears of *Death*, or the  
 “ Danger of Damnation.”

§ 9. The *sudden Death* of a wicked Man is always a *miserable Case*.

Indeed, let a wicked Man die how he will, whether by a lingering or *sudden Death*, he is miserable. And yet there is something in the *sudden Death* of a wicked Man, that it adds still more to the misery of his Case. For a Man to be snatch'd away in his Sins, to be clapt *suddenly* to the Bar of God, reeking from his Lusts, and ruffled with Vanity; an Enemy to God by wicked Works and a carnal Mind! Dreaming of a long life, at least depending upon a Death-bed Opportunity! At once to be cut down for the Fire! Such a fall is lower than the Grave----a *sudden Death* and *sudden* Damnation! Lord! what surprize! what Confusion? It is not for any Words of mine to de-  
 scribe



scribe such a Case. Let the Words of God himself be heard, *They spend their Days in Mirth and in a Moment go down to the Grave, how oft is the Candle of the wicked put out (p) in a Moment shall they die, the People shall be troubled at midnight, and the mighty are taken away without Hands (q) They are driven from the Light into Darknes, and chased out of the World, for the wicked are driven away in their wickedness, but the righteous have hope in their Death (r) he that being often reprov'd, hardens his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy. (s) Man also knoweth not his time but as Fishes are taken in an evil Net, and Birds are caught in a Snare, so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them (t) for the Lord of that Servant shall come in a Day that he looked not for him, and in an Hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with Hypocrites, there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of Teeth. (u)*

§ 10. There are some *Disadvantages* even to good Men themselves in a sudden Death, but then the Advantages seem to me, at present, to be more considerable.

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(p) Job. 21. 13---17

(q) 34. 20 ( ) ch. 18. 18.

(r) Pro. 29. 1.

(s) Eccles. 9. 12.

(t) Mat. 25. 50.

(u) 51.

There may be some Disadvantages in the Case to a good Person. neither Soul nor House may be in so good Order, as one could wish. He was a very good Man who cryed out, *spare me that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more.* Its true, he knew where to go for Consolation, under any *sudden* stroke; and to say, *although my House be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting Covenant, well ordered in all Things and sure.* (w) He may be startled. Every Thing may not be so ready for the Journey. It looks so much like snatching away from one World to another, as may give a good Man some disorder. a *sudden* Messenger tho' it be but to call us into the next Room, gives Apprehensions; much more if into another Country, another Kingdom, tho' to a great Estate, Things may be left in some Confusion. ----- Just Debts unpaid; Children unprovided for; State of Affairs unknown to Survivors. There might have been some good done upon the sick Bed. The Opportunity of giving a Testimony for God and Religion, and expressing our Faith and Hope in another World; exhorting our Friends and Families with our dying Breath; all this is prevented; which has been of great use to many, and made great Impressions at such a Time as that, when a Man is hovering between both Worlds, and joins the Experience of the emptiness of one World, with the

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(w) 2. Sam. 23. 5.



Prospect of the Glorys of another, it gives a mighty weight to what he says, to his Family and Friends, all which is lost.

These are Disadvantages of a *sudden Death* even in the Case of a good Man. But then it must be observed, that these Disadvantages may be in a great Measure prevented, and ought to be so, as far as we have it in our Power; and the different Circumstance of Affairs will allow. What we can settle, provide for, and put in Order, ought to be so; and what Men cannot, which the Nature and Circumstance of the Thing, will not admit of, we must leave to God, as a good Man may, and will, and then consider the Advantages, whether they be not greater; and do not prove, that to be at all Times true, *Blessed is that Servant; whom his Lord, (whensoever,) he cometh shall find so doing.* When a Man is habitually Prepared, and actually ready; safe in State, and in a good Frame; has followed the Business, or enjoyed the Pleasures of life, in a constant expectation of meeting *Death* any where, knowing that it lurked for him every where; “Such a Man by a *sudden* “*Death* slips out of the World, as a Man “would choose sometimes to do out of a “great deal of Company, without making a “bustle about taking leave with a great deal of “troublesome Ceremony at parting. This is “to be surpris’d into happiness, and more like “a Translation than a Dissolution.” For it is to be considered that,

(1) It is *God's Time*, and manner, let it be when, and how it will. This is indeed common to all sorts of Dying, And it is some help towards our Submission to any kind of *Death*, and consequently to this of *sudden Death*, which is what People are commonly most afraid of, *that it is Gods Time*. Not to meddle with the agitated Question about the Period of a Mans Life, whether *fixed* or *moveable*; The Scripture teaches us to say, in the general, that, *he has determined the Times before appointed; and that Mans Days are determined, and that the Number of his Months are with the Lord* (x) *that a Sparrow does not fly down to take up his Meat without our Father*, much less a Soul fly up to Heaven. That *the Hairs of our Head are number'd*, and not one *falls to the Ground without him*, much less a Body of a good Man into the Grave. Doubtless he has an Hand in ordering all these Things. And yet the same Scriptures ascribe to God the Power of prolonging Life or cutting it short. And derive from thence motives of Duty and Obedience, and do enforce the regard due to the supreme Governour, from the Consideration of his Power to lengthen or shorten the Life of Man, as Men please or displease God. It is necessary in this, and some other Questions of great Difficulty, for me to believe all that God says, and Practice all he Commands; this is indeed necessary; but it is not necessary for me to be able to solve

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(x) Acts. 17. 26. Job. 14. 5.



solve all the Difficulties that may attend the Case; no, nor to puzzle my self about them. And wherever I see Damnation or Salvation made to depend upon what the great God has never suspended either upon, I always conclude something else is in the Design than to fright Men to Heaven. “ If there be upon Earth a  
“ proper way to render the most sacred Truth  
“ suspected, ’tis by supporting it with un-  
“ grounded *Threats*, to *Terrify* People into a  
“ Beliefe of it.” But to return,

(2) Again, for a good Man to die, is *Gain*, let it be where and when and how it will. No manner of dying can rebate any Thing of that consolation, that for *me to live is Christ and to die is gain*. If Christ’s Spirit be the principle of Life, If his Word be the Rule, his Life the Pattern of my Life, and his Death my Trust, and his Glory my end; If my Sins are pardoned, my Soul sanctified, God reconciled, and Heaven secured; so that *whether present or absent; I am the Lords: to die is gain*, whether it be *suddenly*, or in a more ling’ring manner, in full Peace, or slain in Battle; in a Bed or on a Scaffold; by a private Distemper, or a publick Calamity; Famine, Pestilence, Lightning, or by evil Spirits. For why an evil Spirit may not sometime be commissioned to Kill a good Man, as well as a Tile, or a Sword, I can give no reason.

(3) Further, it has been well Observed, that in *sudden Death*, Satan has no Opportunity to disturb with his *Temptations*. That “ *He is*

“ usually most impetuous when we have least  
 “ Power to resist him. When Flesh and Heart  
 “ fails, and the whole Man languishes upon a  
 “ sick Bed, he makes dreadful Assaults upon  
 “ many a one. (y) Tempting them to di-  
 “ strust God. Endeavouring to darken all  
 “ their Lights and Ravish their Comforts from  
 “ them. To disquiet their Mind; Satan comes  
 “ down having great rage, because he knows  
 “ his Time is but short, and tho’ he cannot  
 “ make Death fatal, he endeavours to make  
 “ it uncomfortable, and terrible to the Soul.”

A Time of Sicknes is an Hour of Temptation,  
 wherein *Satan desires to have us that he may  
 sift us as Wheat.*

(4) This vain World has no Time to come  
 in with its Allurements, which many Times  
 make the Soul unwilling to be gone, and it  
 has been a great Trouble to the Servants of God  
 that the World should haunt them even on a  
 sick Bed.

(5) The *parting Sorrows of Friends and  
 Relations are hereby prevented*, they have been  
 known to add a deal of Agony and Anguish to  
 a lingering Disease. “ We find St. Paul com-  
 “ plains more sensibly of the immoderate Sor-  
 “ rows of his Friends, than of all the malice  
 “ of his Enemies. When he was assured that  
 “ Bonds and Imprisonment did every where  
 “ abide him, he could say, *none of these  
 Things move me*; but the parting Tears of the  
 Dis-

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(y) Mr. Tong's Fun. Serm, on the sudden Death of Mr. Shewell.



“ Disciples broke his Heart, *what mean you to weep and break my Heart.*” (2) He could better endure the shedding his own Blood than the pouring out of their Tears. (a) Taking leave of Friends is unpleasant Work at all Times, but dying farwels are very cutting. *Farwell dear Husband — farwell, 'till we meet in the Invisible World, my dear Wife — and you my Children — I die — but, the Lord will surely visit —* This opens all the Sluices of tenderness. A sudden Death prevents these killing formalities of Separation, under which, those that are left behind do scarce survive. A Christian meets his Heavenly Father without the sorrows of parting with his earthly Relations.

(6) The *miseries of a lingring Sicknefs* are hereby prevented. The languishing Faintings, Qualms, torturing Pains, Restlessness, from Morning to Evening and from Evening to Morning. Lonely, shut up, pining, abandon'd of the World; Men oftenly. The Nausea of Physic, and the many afflictive Methods dictated by Hope and Despair, equally trying as the Distempers; and sometimes worse than the Disease it self. The Drenchings, Cuttings, Burning, Blistering, which make it easier to die than to be healed! The Beauty and Strength of the Body consumes like a Moth. The Faculties of the Mind are often Impaired, Darken'd and Obstructed. The Judgment shatter'd,  
the

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(2) Mr. Tong's Fun. Sermon. &c.

(a) N. Tailour on the Fun, of Mr. Vincent.

the Spirits broken, the Soul is held close to a continual and sad Meditation upon the misery of its own Case; which makes a Man pine away in the bitterness of his Soul from Morning to Evening. *In the Morning would God it were Evening, in the Evening would God it were Morning; he will cut me off with pining sickness, from Day even till Night will he make an end of me. Like a Crane or a Swallow so did I chatter, I did mourn as a Dove. Mine Eyes fail with looking upward. Oh Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me, Is. 38.* He darts up a Prayer one Minute, but fetcheth a longer groan the next. The tiring out ones Friends and wearing away their Patience as well as our own. (b) The solemn approaches of Death, and the Formalities that attend the Apprehension, put more Deaths than one into the Case. Without the Ceremonies and Circumstances with which Death is set out, the Thing it self had not been so formidable to many; but the cries of Mothers, Wives and Children; The complaisance of Friends, who must testify their

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(b) When Sickness has been of long continuance it has been hard to be born. It is observed that *Job*, at first could say, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*, who took away his Comforts, as well as gave them, but when his Troubles were encreased and hung upon him, he began to be a weary; his Soul fainted in him, and he cursed the Day of his Birth. Some when first visited have rejoiced to think that their Warfare is almost accomplished, but after some time they have been far otherwise. Extremity of Pain has caused great indisposition of Soul, and they have had much a do to be contented either to live or die. *They are chastened with Pain on their Bed, and the multitude of their Bones with strong Pain. so that their Life abhorreth Bread and their Soul dainty Meat; their Flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and their Bones, that were not seen, stick out. Job. 33.*



their love to the Family by endeavouring to break your Heart; and with great civility infuse additional bitterness into the Cup. These double the sorrows, and add smart to every Pang. The Attendants are pale, and blubbering, the dark Room, the Tapers, the Physicians, the Looks, the Whispers! ——— this is all ghastliness and horror ——— let a Man die in a Minute, or an Hour, and all this is prevented. Which has nothing to do with dying, but belongs to that wretched *Remnant* of Life, a lingring sickness. No Martyrdoms, no Executions, are to be compared with the Tortures of long lying under some Distempers; Indeed, when the great God, who has a right to make what use of us he pleases, designs to set forth an Example of Patience and long suffering, it must be submitted to, and we must be glad if we can glorify God any way. As the Excellent *Doctor A. Rivet*, who lay a long Time under the most grievous Distemper, the *Misereere mei Domine*, and seemed to have been qualified by Grace, and set up by Providence, as a Pattern of bearing with Chearfulness and Resignation, what one trembles to think of; when many Persons were endeavouring to visit him, and enter his Chamber, and his Friends were ready to think it a disturbance to him, *Let all come (says he) and see me die, and learn of me how to die.*

Upon the whole, Death is a sort of painful *Operation*, in order to perfect Health and Cure. Now if a Man has a Leg or an Arm to be cut off,

off, and it must be done, the quicker the better. Every Body prays for the Advantage of a quick Dispatch in such a Case. The separation of Soul and Body is a great *Operation*, and when it must be performed, next to the happy Consequences of dying well, nothing seems more desirable than such a way of dying as may save from all these Miseries, and give an easy access to all the Blessings of those who *die in the Lord*. (c)

Mr. Bayl speaking of the *sudden Death* of *Gregorius Valla*, while his Auditors were waiting at the usual Hour for a Lecture upon the *Tusculan Questions* of *Cicero*, says, that we must not look upon *sudden Death* with the views of a Christian to count it any felicity, but with the Eyes of *Augustus*; an happy Death according to that Emperor, was such an one, as was not preceded by any Pains and Sickness, such he wished for himself and for all his. This is a strange way of Talking. As if the looking upon *sudden Death* with the Eyes of *Augustus*, that is, as an happiness upon Account of its *freedom from preceding Pains of Sickness*, was any hindrance to our looking upon it with the Eyes of a *Christian*, that is, as an happiness upon the double Account, *viz.* A freedom from foregoing Pains, and from any after Pains too, and the Entrance into eternal Pleasures at the same Time. So that the

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(c) Pæna minor certam subito perferre Ruinam,  
Quod Timeas gravius sustinuisse diu.



the Christian here has all in view that his Emperor had, besides a great deal more. And I hope its no Disadvantage to the Christian, to look thro' an easy *sudden Death* to a glorious Eternity. Ay but the Christian Doctrine (says he) *makes repentance necessary to salvation which a sudden Death Intercepts* — It does so in the Case of an ill Man, in which Case no Body ever counted it an happiness; nor can think of it without deep concern, whether it happen in wicked Emperors or Slaves; but then a good Man can never need that Repentance in order to Salvation, which it is in the Power of *sudden Death* to intercept. For that Repentance does not so much consist in single Acts, upon particular Occasions, as in the habitual change of Mind, and Heart, and Frame and Life, which is the supposed Character of a *righteous Man* that *needs no such repentance* as a *sudden Death* can Intercept.

What Mr. *Bayl* says about *Predestination* in this Case, will not, I believe, be any way edifying to my Reader, I shall therefore wave it. But now his Article is before me, I will add out of it the following remarks, which do belong to the Subject.

The Father of *Augustus*, by adoption, *J. Cæsar*, was of the same Sentiment. He found fault with the manner in which *Cyrus* is represented by *Xenophon* to have taken leave of the World, as too stiff, formal and contemptable. There is in every Thing a natural easiness much more beautiful than all the studied Artifice in the World. Nothing appeared a

more commodious way of dying to *Cæsar* than to slip out of the World at once. Such a sort of Death he had, but it was violent. The Day before he was killed he was at Supper with *Lepidus*, the discourse turned upon this Question, *what was the most commodious way of dying*, he then preferred the *sudden* and the unexpected Death. (*d*)

§ 11. How fitly does Christ use this Consideration of a *sudden* surprise, as a *motive* to our being *always ready*? Therefore be ye also ready for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh. Mat. 24. 44. Where he finely illustrates the misery of a surprise, and inforces the duty of watching and preparing for the *coming of our Lord*. The coming of the Lord is sometimes applyed to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; as in *Matthew* 24. Sometime to the final judgment at the End of

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(*d*) Illud plane inter Omnes fere constitit, talem ei mortem pene ex sententia Obtigisse. Nam & quondam cum apud Xenophonem legisset, Cyrum ultima valetudine mandasse de funere suo, aspernatus tam lentum mortis genus, subitam sibi celeremq; optaverat. Et pridie quam occideretur in Sermonem nato super canam apud M. Lepidum, quisnam esset finis vitæ Commodissimus, repentinum, inopinatumq; prætulerat.

Sueton in Augusto. c. 100.

*Hesiod* reckons it among the Prerogatives of the *Golden Age* that Men sweetly died away, then, in the Arms of Sleep. And one of our Criticks blames *Ovid* for having omitted that Priviledge in his Description of the *Golden Age*.

Jul. Scalig. quoted by Mr. Menage speaking of his Fathers Death, in that very manner *eo igitur modo placido et quieto Parentis meus fato functus est*.

*Urbanus Regius* died suddenly after the Manner he had always desired and wished for; always deprecating a long and tedious Sickness.



of the World; sometimes to any extraordinary *Visitation*, of a Nation, Family or Person; whether in a way of Judgment or Mercy. In a way of Judgement, as Rev. 3. 3. *I will come upon thee as a Theif in the Night, and thou shalt not know what Hour I will come upon thee*; or in a way of mercy, as Gen. 18. *at the Time appointed will I come, or return unto thee*. Now when such Visitations as these are called *the coming of the Lord*, the Phrase may very well be applied to *sudden Death*. And the motive is strong and proper, least *coming suddenly he find you sleeping* Mar. 13. 36. Least coming unexpected he find you unprepared; secure, unapprehensive of any such Thing, and unprovided for it. Be ye therefore *always ready*. As *Death* is a great Journey have all Things *ready*, for a comfortable Passage and a welcome Reception. As it is an *Operation*, have all Things *ready*, to go through it with support, Courage and Resignation. As it is a great *Change*, be *ready*, that it may be for your Benefit and Advantage. As it is a *Decision* for Eternity be *ready*, that it may go on the right side, that there may not be the confusion of having any Thing to seek at the Day of Tryall. Delay not to believe in the *L. J. C.* to repent of Sin; to surrender all to his Will, the most beloved Lust not excepted. Comply with the whole Method of his Salvation. Hasten as for Life and Soul to obtain that holiness *without which no Man shall see the Lord*. That godlike Temper of Mind, as well as obe-

dient practise of Life, which are so necessary in the Nature of the Thing, and in the appointment of God to your dying into Happiness. Remember that none can live in a World into which they are not born; no more than Animals out of their proper Element. And to live in Heaven we must be born for it, *except a Man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

No Business is of equal Necessity, Weight and Consequence. Will you compare any Thing with God, Heaven and an Immortal Soul? He would be stared at, as a strange Man indeed, who should say, in so many Words, that the securing all these, is no Part of his Business. He is something more strange who Acts the very Thing he dares not say, and never makes preparation for Death any Part of his Business. But the Men who Act at that rate are so common, that People don't point at them as they go along. 'Tis allowed that Business must be minded, but why should not this be Part of it? Don't you sometimes strain a point upon Business, and upon some Occasions make it wait upon Pleasure, Recreation and Company? as much as the Plea of it, stands in the way of some Peoples saving their Souls, have not those Persons sometimes made even *Business* it self stand by, to give way to a Bottle and a Friend? why not to God, and your own Soul? Don't you owe to them two, as much as to any Friend in the World? Do as much for your Salvation as you now and then



then do for a little Company, or a little Diversion, and you may have nothing to fear from *Sudden Death*, no more than Others. Besides, the Business so much pleaded, when enquired into, amounts to nothing but getting Mony; enjoying Pleasures; or visiting this and that Friend; all which may be done better, one would think, with the additional Pleasure of a safe State and a good Conscience. Preparation for Death is consistent enough with all the other Business in the World. There have been known some who have Pray'd with the *Spade* in the Hand; dug the Ground and wept at the same Time; labour'd and Prayed; who have carried on the work of Grace at the *Loom*, and at the *Anvil*. People are mistaken to think that all Religion is shut up in a Closet, and that the Business of Repentance and Conversion must needs pass thro' such a Number of Offices, and a Bead roll of Prayers. The Thing is a change of Heart and Life, true Faith in Christ, sincere Repentance, firm Resolutions, and persevering Obedience; and what is there in all this that need jostle with Day labour, Merchandise, or any Business of Life? Christianity was never designed only for Gentlemen and Schollars. *Enter into thy Closet*, supposes that we have daily Business between God and our own Souls. Retirement yields the Improvement and Entertainments of Religion; yet as it is said in another Case, all is accepted, *according to what a Man hath, and not according to what a Man hath not*, 'Tis the  
the

the Grace of Christian Prudence that *sorts* every Thing to its proper Place and Time. The Business of the World need not shut out the Religion of the Temple or the Closet, nor be at all damaged by it.

The way to Heaven lyes all along the Road of our lawful Calling, as well as thro' the *Church*. Sermons and Prayers, are not the only Employments that deserve the Name of *Divine Service*. Our lawful Calling, in its proper Season, pursued in a conscientious Manner, is as truly serving God, ay and more too, than any Thing we can do in Church or Closet, at a Time, when the Duty of our Station obliges us to be elsewhere, *viz.* In our Families or Shops. For every one will allow it to be applicable to Men of Business, what the Apostle says concerning Servants, and their Work, Eph. 6. 5. *Exc. Servants be obedient to them that are your Masters — in singleness of Heart as UNTO CHRIST; not with Eye service as Men pleasers, but as the SERVANTS OF CHRIST, doing the WILL OF GOD from the Heart, with good will doing service AS TO THE LORD AND not to Men.* Its true, some Persons Affairs are of that sort, and must needs lie in such a manner, that they cannot be set in the same Order and disposition as others. Here, s one ready to say, " Let me die when I will, or how God pleases I can never have my Matters so ordered as some others may, whose Affairs be in a less Compass, or are of another Nature. Nor



“ Nor can I put them into any other Order  
 “ than they are.” Its Ignorance of the World  
 to think that every particular Rule of Pru-  
 dence, can suite every particular Person and  
 Case, such Persons must set their House in  
 Order as far as they can, and leave the rest to  
 God. Only what thou doest do quickly. De-  
 lays are always Dangerous, often fatal. 'Tis  
 a folly to run so prodigious a Venture! when  
 God says, *to Day*, and you say, *to morrow*,  
 it is in Effect to tell God you *won't* to Day.  
 God knows very well whether it be you *can-*  
*not* or your *Will not*. If your Child or Ser-  
 vant shou'd Answer you so, you would resent  
 it. You can have no true pleasure of life tell  
 you are free from the fears of Death; which  
 lies in Ambush every where, and meets us  
 from all points of the Compass, stir which  
 way we will we run full upon it. I desire none  
 of the *Opiates* those Men use, who can go to  
 sleep, with the Apprehension, that if they die  
 in sleep they shall awake in Hell. This is  
 enough for me, that if *Death* in its Consequen-  
 ces can do me no hurt, then the prospect of it  
 need give me no Trouble, for what need that  
 give us any Trouble, that can do us no harm?  
 “ For my own Part (says the late Mr. *Tailour*),  
 “ (f) on mature Deliberation, I do not think  
 “ it a desirable Thing for a good Man, who is  
 “ ready for Death, to be worn away like a  
 “ Stone by a continual dropping. May my  
 “ House and Soul be in Order, and then the  
 “ sooner it quits this vile Body, and leaves this  
 “ wret-

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(f) In his Serm. on the Fun. of Mr. N. Vincent.



“ wretched World, if in the twinkling of an  
 “ Eye, so much the better. To which there  
 “ is but one Circumstance more that I would  
 “ desire, may be added, viz. that I may die  
 “ Preaching the *everlasting Gospel*, or Admi-  
 “ nistring the *Lords Supper*. May my Taper  
 “ be blown out in the Sanctuary. And may  
 “ I presently pass, in an Instant, from serving  
 “ the Church militant here on Earth, to join  
 “ with the Church Triumphant in Heaven.  
 “ But we must not be our own chusers, and to  
 “ be sure God will dispose all Things in the  
 “ best manner for those that are his.”

He had his wish in some Measure. Dying  
 in his sleep; as the Poet who sprinkled some  
 Flowers upon his Hearse, says of him,  
*To whome the rare Felicity was given*  
*To fall asleep on Earth and wake in Heaven.*  
 We may Express our Desires of what we have  
 some Reasons to prefer. Such a Preference is  
 very consistent with Resignation; as here we  
 find those very desires themselves left to God,  
 which is certainly the most becoming Frame  
 for us to leave the World in; as in the Obser-  
 vations of *Erasmus*, *Some are wishing for one*  
*Death and some for another, some would die*  
*of one Distemper and some of another, some*  
*woud lie so long, and others so long; but the*  
*greatest Faith is that which leaves it intirely to*  
*God, how long we shall lie sick, and what kind*  
*of Death we shall die (g)*

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(g) Sed firmioris est fidei, mortis genus et spatium Ægrotatio-  
 nis, Deo. Committere. *Erasm. Præp. ad Mortem.*